

NAVY Recruiter

Magazine for Navy Recruiters

July 2001



Take the *SEAL Challenge* **INSIDE**

Officer Programs: In-depth Interview

NAVY Recruiter

July 2001

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On the cover:

SEAL Trident, ribbons and parachute wings provided by ENC (SEAL) Roger Roberts. Photo By JO2 Kimberly Vore, NRD Kansas City public affairs officer. Art work by JO2 Bashon W. Mann, NR Editor.

Navy Recruiter Magazine would like to bid a fond farewell to our Managing Editor of two years, LT Brad Fagan as he departs Navy Recruiting. Fair winds and following seas...



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OFFICER RECRUITING: STRATEGIC PLANS FOR SUCCESS

My communications to the field often focus on the challenges and triumphs of enlisted recruiting. You should not take that to mean our officer recruiters don't face formidable challenges. While enlisted recruiting usually is perceived as the wolf closest to the sled, successfully fulfilling the nation's need for naval officers requires the unflagging energies of our officer recruiters as well as keen oversight by all personnel who manage these diverse programs.

Finding qualified candidates interested in pursuing a Navy commission can be a daunting task. Officer recruiters simultaneously seek top-quality college students and graduates for commission — from a variety of academic disciplines — while also recruiting youngsters for NROTC scholarship programs. Future officers are evaluated on academic and discipline-specific abilities, as well as on personal characteristics such as adaptability, versatility, integrity, and dedication. In addition to leadership and managerial skills, potential officers must be able to provide the technical and scientific expertise necessary for success in a wide array of Navy specialties.

To be effective, officer recruiters have to know their targets and then develop and implement sound marketing plans. They must familiarize themselves with the requirements of all our officer programs and stay abreast of the Navy's fluctuating level of need for those officers. Unlike our enlisted recruiting programs, where recruiters focus on selling the concept of naval service rather than a specific navy occupation, officer recruiters also function as classifiers. It's their job to match applicants' abilities, interests, and qualifications to available programs and to the Navy's projected manning needs.

The success rate of officer program recruiting has improved significantly in the past two years. Submarine, pilot, and nuclear officer programs, which had been struggling, are once again successful. The turn-around of these programs can be attributed directly to strategic recovery plans, specifically designed to overcome obstacles, enhance communication, and concentrate fleet-wide attention on program deficits. The interview with CDR Brian Vance, Director of Officer Programs and Director of Nuclear and Submarine Programs, on pages 10-11 of this issue details some of the major initiatives we've employed to turn these programs around. Com-

mander Vance's comments also address future changes geared toward officer recruiting.

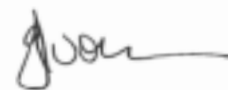
With that solid track record, similar recovery plans have been developed and instituted for other officer programs, such as the Civil Engineer Corps, Chaplain Corps, and Naval Flight Officer programs. While recovery plans have substantially enhanced the success of programs to which they've been applied, improvements are not instantaneous. Often, it may take up to two years for results to be visible.

In the interim, officer programs soon will get a boost from changes planned for the Navy.com web site. Working in conjunction with our advertising agency Campbell-Ewald, CNRC is developing an Officer Programs enhancement to the Navy.com web site. That modification, expected to go on-line the 1st of July, will feature portals (electronic entry points) for education, personal development, training, and career expectations designed specifically for prospective officer candidates.

Web casts also are being added to the site. A new web cast will debut monthly, July-September 2001, and will feature Sailors from three different Navy programs. The first will feature the EP-3 pilot, LT Shane Osborn. Also on the drawing board are plans to renovate and update the Blue Angels web site and to incorporate that site into the Navy.com web site.

Future plans also call for heavier recruiting among college students and graduates in non-technical disciplines. Historically, the Navy has emphasized its high-tech nature and training, but that emphasis may have discouraged candidates who majored in non-technical disciplines from applying for commission. New marketing endeavors will open the pipelines to those prospective applicants.

The contributions of our officer recruiters and support staff are invaluable. The fleet and the nation depend on their ability to provide a cadre of young officers who demonstrate the personal integrity and commitment to service necessary for leading the next generation of Sailors. We — all of us in recruiting — appreciate your dedication and perseverance. Keep up the great work! **NR**



The SEAL Challenge...IS YOUR STATION READY???

**Story and photo by JO2 Kimberly Vore
and ENC(SEAL) Roger W. Roberts
NRD Kansas City Public Affairs Officer**

Wouldn't it be great for your station to have one more contract to show at the end of the month? The Navy Recruiting community has the opportunity to capture a fair share of the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps' market that is relatively untapped by the Navy. If each station utilized this resource for one additional recruit each month, it would result in an additional 1,500 recruits for the Navy each month.

The Navy is missing out on a large part of a highly motivated, physically fit male market that doesn't understand the complete Navy mission. Many young men want the adventure to "run and gun." They want the excitement of the commando lifestyle. These prospective recruits want to sky-dive, shoot every kind of weapon, work with explosives, SCUBA dive, learn to be a sniper, and be a part of an elite TEAM.

As a recruiter, many times I hear a young man say, "All I've ever wanted to be is a Navy SEAL." When I offer to show them how to reach their goal, they reply, "No, I am going into the Marines first." Immediately, I realize they don't understand that other options are available to

them, and that I have to overcome their misconceptions to help them reach their goal in the Navy.

Then there are instances of recruiters from the other branches passing on misinformation to the applicants to get them to join their branch of service. Inaccurate statements from "you can join the Marines and cross straight over to the SEALs because the Marines are a part of the Navy," to "SEAL instructors are all Marines." These recruiters are working off of the applicants' and Navy recruiters' past limited information and resources. This article will help you to recapture our market.

Here are 3 steps to successfully capture this vast market.

Step 1 – Contact SEAL recruiters by accessing the Internet WebSite for Navy Special Warfare Community recruiters. The Web site has information to help the applicant and the recruiter reach their Navy goals. The address is www.sealchallenge.navy.mil.

Within this site, you will find information on the locations of SEAL recruiters and motivators, physical fitness program, nutritional information, waiver information, FAQs, and all the

requirements for becoming a Navy SEAL or SWCC (Special Warfare Combat Crewmember). There are currently nine SEAL recruiters at various districts and NRS's throughout the nation.

Step 2 – Receiving SEAL RADS is a phone call away. Start by calling the SEAL Motivator West Coast (619) 437-5009/2049 or the East Coast Motivator (757) 462-4128. You will need to give your name, station address and a current phone number. You will also need to specify which RADS you would like to receive. RADS available to you include: a current SEAL Recruiting Video entitled "Class 224," folders, posters, and lithographs.

Step 3 - NAVY SEAL REQUIREMENTS / WAIVERS SEAL Requirements according to the CRUITMAN:

- Minimum ASVAB score VE+AR=104 and MC=50
- Eyesight - 20/40 in one eye and 20/70 in the other eye, correctable to 20/20. PRK is the ONLY eye surgery authorized for the Navy SEAL Program.
- No color blindness (light test, not picture book).
- Must be 28 years old or less.

- Only men are eligible.
- Must be a U.S. Citizen.
- Pass the Physical Screen Test.

Current SEAL Waivers not yet updated in the CRUITMAN:

(In order to obtain these waivers you must contact a Navy SEAL recruiter and you can locate them on the www.sealchallenge.navy.mil WebSite

ASVAB WAIVER: five points. For further question refer to waiver POC.

EYE WAIVER: If you're not qualified to join the Navy based on your enlistment physical, then you cannot use PRK or Lasik surgery to get qualified.

If you do not qualify for the SEALs because your vision is worse than 20/70 in one eye and 20/100 in the other, here are your options:

1) Pay out of pocket for PRK (preferred by the SEALs) or Lasik eye surgery. After surgery, wait the initial six-month healing period and then you are ready for recruit training. There is also a one-year wait from the time of the surgery to attend BUD/S.

2) If your vision is no worse than 20/200 in both eyes, join the Navy and volunteer for SWCC and you are eligible for PRK or Lasik surgery. Re-apply and attend BUD/S one year after the time of surgery.

If you qualify for the Navy and your vision is no worse than 20/70 in one eye and 20/100 in the other, here is one option:

1) Join the Navy in a SEAL source rating and go to recruit training. In recruit training, on P-3 day, volunteer for the SEAL / SWCC program. Pass the Screening Test and you will receive a vision waiver, graduate BUD/S, become a SEAL and the Navy will pay for PRK surgery. You do not need to have the SEAL Challenge contract to attend BUD/S.

AGE WAIVER: Up to 24 months and must be in BUD/S before 30th birthday. (Contact SEAL recruiter if applicant is past 30).

CIVIL WAIVER: All civil convictions can be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Waiver Points of Contact:

- ASVAB, Age, Civil Waiver

Asst. ECM QMCM (EOD) Steve Marshall
(703) 614-6854 E-mail: n132d7a@bupers.navy.mil

- Eye Waiver:

BUMED-21 POC

HM1(SEAL) Aggelston (202) 762-3446 Fax /0931

NOTE: If an applicant is not qualified as per the PRIDE or CRUITMAN, and falls within the waiver requirements explained above, contact the SEAL Motivator/Recruiters, ECM or BUMED.

Now that you are armed with these resources, go out and challenge these misinformed applicants head on. Utilize all the assets you have available. You will be able to capture the vast market of highly qualified individuals desiring the commando lifestyle. The Naval Special Warfare community is here to serve you! So the next time your applicant says he wants to join another service's Special Forces, tell him to give you five minutes of his time and let him talk to the Navy SEAL recruiter. **NR**



COMMANDER NAVY RECRUITING COMMAND AND CERIDIAN LIFEWORKS PARTNERSHIP CONTINUES

Ceridian Lifeworks Performance Partners is pleased to announce the new Lifeworks® Online. A convenient, personalized 24/7 resource with something for everyone.



In August 2000, Navy Recruiting Command launched a new and expanded Quality of Life service called Lifeworks. The Lifeworks program is an advice/counseling resource for recruiting personnel and their families. Lifeworks has dramatically improved access of Family Assistant Services. Navy Recruiting Command has extended their partnership with Ceridian Lifeworks for another year.

The newly redesigned Lifeworks Online provides you with immediate access to a wealth of work and life benefits. The site is filled with useful information and quick tools that can help you balance your work and personal life.

Just take a look at all the new and enhanced features:

- **Easy navigation:** search by keyword, use the site map, or simply roll over drop-down menus
- **"My Lifeworks":** sign up and customize the site with features like "My Bookmarks"
- **Child Care Locator:** search for child

care centers near your home or work

- **Elder Care Finder:** locate nursing homes, assisted living arrangements, and home health agencies in any community
- **Q & A Forums:** find answers to the real-life questions sent to our consultants
- **Newsletters:** sign up for free newsletter subscriptions that address a variety of life issues
- **Bulletin Boards:** post messages about popular topics such as parenting and child care, financial issues, and education
- **Moderated Chats:** chat on a variety of issues, moderated by trained consultants for advice and information accuracy
- **Advice:** e-mail access to a Lifeworks Online consultant
- **Weekly Polls:** get real-time glimpses of how others feel about certain topics
- **Today's Tip:** receive information on a variety of themes
- **Supporting Resources:** view, listen, or print an array of informative materials

Taking care of work and life has never been easier. Lifeworks is working hard to help recruiters and their families through problems in their daily lives. For further access information contact your local Recruiting District Command Master Chief or Navy Recruiting Command Lifeworks Liaisons Coordinator, HMCS(SW/FMF) Rogers, (901) 874-9140. **NR**

Helos in the skies of Memphis

Story by JO1 (SQ/SW) Kelly Firebaugh
NRD St. Louis Public Affairs Officer

For the average Sailor aboard a ship or stationed on a military installation, the sound of helicopters chopping through the ceiling or overhead is normal. It's not, however, that common at Wooddale High School in Memphis.

Memphis native, Lt. Wisdom Coleman, a Navy helicopter flight instructor, Ensign John Alderink, one of his students, and AMS3 Marcell Richardson, a helicopter aircrewman also from Memphis, recently flew one of the Navy's training helicopter hundreds of miles to visit some Tennessee students.

The students were, to say the least, enthusiastic.

"This is so cool!" exclaimed one student. "Wait until I tell my brother!"

The aircraft came to the district on a dual mission. All helicopter pilots must log a certain amount of hours over land to get their wings. Navy Recruiting District St. Louis is always

looking for ways to bring Navy awareness to the local area. Are the lightbulbs going off in your head, yet?

After landing the chopper in the middle of the school's football field, all three of the crewmembers got out of the CH-56 to answer the questions of the teens and teachers who gathered round for a closer look. Then it was off to the auditorium where Coleman spoke to a group of students about the opportunities the Navy had provided him and what these students may opt for.

Richardson then took the stage and let the young men and women gathered in the auditorium know all about the enlisted side of Naval aviation and the opportunities which awaited them there.

"What it takes is this," the pilot explained, "dedication, a little bit of patriotism, motivation and setting yourself up to succeed. I cannot stress that enough."

Coleman then compared the enlisted men and women of

the Navy to those who work in the civilian sector.

"I would pit any 18-year-old kid that goes to college to any 18-year-old kid on that carrier," he said. "I will tell you who is more responsible — that kid on the flight deck, bar none."

After an hour at the school answering questions, the flight crew headed to Millington Municipal Airport, where Navy ROTC students and delayed entry personnel (DEPPers) from the local recruiting stations took a turn at flying, and even a little bit of piloting of their own.

As the day came to a close, four DEPPers and six ROTC Midshipmen had gone for a ride, a local high school had a taste of the Navy, and a pilot, a student and an aircrewman had given Navy recruiting a springtime boost. **NR**

Mine Warfare Commander presents NROTC Scholarship

Story and photo by Lt. Marc Boyd
Mine Warfare Command



RADM Jose Betancourt, Commander, Mine Warfare Command, presents Christopher Cornish with his symbolic \$90,000 check for the NROTC scholarship.

For one local high school graduate, questions about what to do this summer have already been answered. Christopher J. Cornish, a 2001 graduate of Incarnate Word Academy, in Corpus Christi, Texas, will prepare to hit the books this fall after receiving a scholarship for up to \$90,000 to attend four years of college.

RADM Jose Betancourt, Commander,

Mine Warfare Command, based in Corpus Christi, presented Cornish with a symbolic check during a brief ceremony. The scholarship, provided under the U. S. Navy's Reserve Officer Training Corps program, allows Cornish to attend Georgia Institute of Technology, where he hopes to major in engineering.

"It's a big honor to be chosen for this,"

Cornish said. "All my hard work paid off!"

Chief Gunner's Mate (Surface Warfare) Duane Dienhart, an officer recruiter in San Antonio, explained that the NROTC scholarship program is very selective. Cornish received one of about 2,600 scholarships handed out by the Navy this year. Students receiving four-year scholarships attend one of 136 colleges and

universities nationwide. Upon graduation, students are commissioned in the U.S. Navy and agree to serve at least four years in uniform, with an additional four-year U.S. Navy Reserve commitment.

More information about the NROTC Scholarship Program can be found at www.navy.com. **NR**

1, 2, 3...

NRD San Francisco recruiter

has “coaching” PINNED!

Story by JO1 Lisa Mikoliczyk
NRD San Francisco Public Affairs Officer

When high school senior Daniel Garcia spoke to CTT1(SW/AW) Kevin Anderson about his ambition to become a Navy SEAL, Anderson counseled him on how he could attain that goal.

When Anderson mentioned to Garcia that he was interested in getting involved in high school wrestling, Daniel gave him some information about the Woodcreek High School wrestling team – in fact, they were in need of a head coach and Garcia suggested that he apply.

Their alliance has paid off for both.

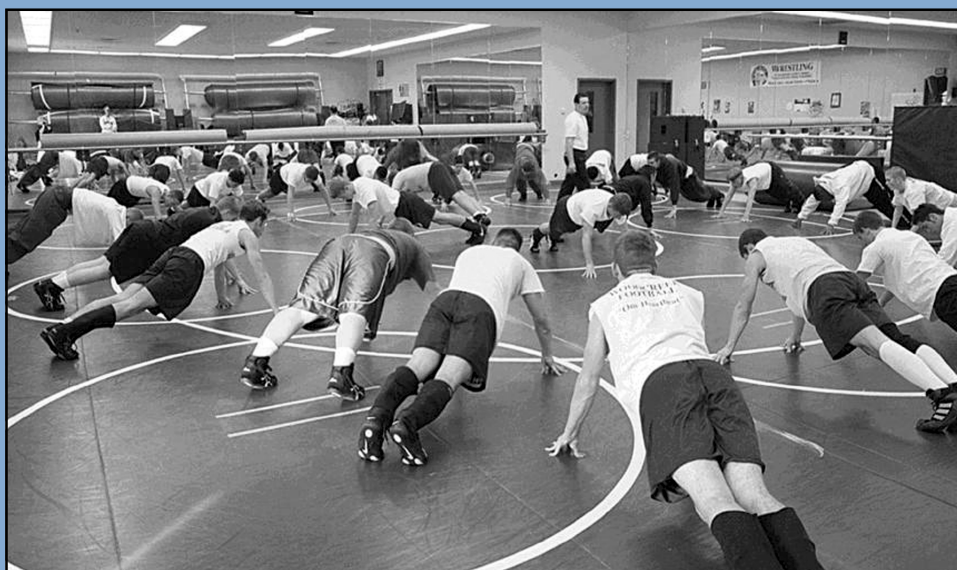
Petty Officer Anderson was named the head coach of the varsity, junior varsity and novice wrestling teams – and finished this past season third in their league, the toughest in Northern California. Garcia is in the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) and will ship to boot camp later this summer.

Anderson’s wrestling experience dated back to his high school years in Lakeland, Fla., but

he’d never coached the sport until taking over at Woodcreek this fall.

“I always knew how to wrestle, but coaching was completely uncharted territory for me,” Anderson said. “I’m still learning, but I think this job has helped me to grow as a leader and definitely allowed me to gain a valuable bond with these kids, the high school, and the community.”

Of the more than 60 wrestlers on Anderson’s squad, three are in DEP...and counting. **NR**



CTT1 Anderson coaches his wrestling team through vigorous training for the meet and life.

The Truth about Officer Programs

An interview from the top with CDR Brian T. Vance, Director of Officer Programs and Nuclear and Submarine Programs

PART I

Interview conducted by JO2 Bashon W. Mann
Editor, Navy Recruiter Magazine

What is the primary objective and goal of Officer Programs?

At the national level we are concerned with recruiting college students and college graduates. We are seeking the highest quality student available to fill the accession needs of all the officer programs in the Navy. We also have the responsibility with respect to the NROTC program to recruit a specific number of applications for CNET to make the decisions on who to offer the scholarships programs to.

From the general officer perspective we look at the point of sale, all the way until the individual reaches their community training pipeline after OCS. We do this not only to select the best, but to manage those folks for success through this part of the accession pipeline. This allows the Navy to ensure they are capable of success.

We are also the principle liaison between the recruiting world and the Navy Personnel Command's manpower world. Thus, we are concerned with the management of the programs

from the personnel perspective. We structure programs such as the Baccalaureate Degree completion program for success.

We also interface with the aviation community with respect to additional waivers to get people into the Naval Flight officer program. Another facet of our responsibility is sharing information between those who select for officer programs and those who recruit for officer programs to keep consistent knowledge of the programs from the point of sale all the way into the community. We are also highly focused on the task of making sure the recruiters have enough program information and understanding of the programs to be credible advisors to the applicants with respect to their chances for selection.

What are some of the latest initiatives within Officer Programs?

In the last year we have focused on developing program information sheets for all of the officer communities, which are

very similar to classifier cards on the enlisted side. These new sheets offer program information about what the junior officer in a specific community will do during their first tour and what training pipeline they will go through. We also listed web sites which provide information to applicants about the community and community points of contact so that if applicants have questions they can contact someone within the community and ask specific questions in case their recruiter needs a little help answering a unfamiliar question.

Over the last year we have gotten Naval Flight Officer and Civil Engineering Corps videos produced. We have gotten them out in the field, not only in VHS format, but also in CD-ROM format to use more effectively.

Within CNRC, we have established a collegiate management section. We have a number of students in college that are also in the Navy, in either the baccalaureate degree completion program, the nuclear propulsion candidate program and the Help Services Collegiate Program. So

now we have a section dedicated to tracking those folks to provide an underpinning to the districts from a collegiate management perspective. What our folks do is look at the transcripts and make sure the candidates are on track to graduate. They ensure the districts are notified when bi-annual physicals are required for the students in the field. They track PRT performance and make sure we are keeping accurate status of the candidates.

What makes officer recruiters most effective?

The most effective officer recruiters seem to be the ones who have good market identification, which means they know and have access to a great number of college students who are performing well. Proper execution of a marketing plan and advertisement placement, which is compelling to the student, is key to being successful.

How has the inception of the new ad campaign helped officer programs?

It's hard for officer recruiting to see much effect because the national advertising campaign is really designed for the enlisted market. There are no airwave commercials, radio or television, which focus specifically on officer programs. What we build on is the energy and enthusiasm generated by the national campaign toward our market. Potential applicants see that being a part of the Navy is an exciting thing to do. Currently, most of the advertising is getting folks to go to the web site, and that is not highly beneficial to officer recruiting because there is no officer component to the web site yet. It was designed specifically for the enlisted market, so the officer programs piece was not included. Now, we are shooting for the 1st of July as a target date to have the officer piece added to Navy.com and it will be a great help to us.

We work in two markets just like the enlisted recruiter. We work in the colleges where we are able to walk on the campus and have relatively easy access to the students, and in the workforce market, where there is a very diverse population and recruit-

ers do not always have easy access to those folks. But I would say that most of those folks do have access to the Internet, and if these advertising initiatives do work to raise the awareness of the Navy, we will obviously benefit from the successful fallout. The "Accelerate Your Life" slogan we are using now is particularly applicable to officer recruiting, because it will be a very recognizable and beneficial in representing the lifestyle of a Navy officer.

What is in the future for Navy Officer recruiting?

We are shooting several videos for specific communities which will certainly help us. We are working to reconstruct the officer recruiting manual. The last update of the manual was 1992 so we have to upgrade the quality of information we are providing to increase the quality of potential applicants. The advertising aspects from mailings and the website perspective are being looked at continually. One of my biggest issues right now is a plan to put new officer recruiters into the field. Over the past seven or eight years there have been two cuts in officer recruiting of 60 officers apiece, one in FY99 and one again in FY02, which means we will have lost one-third of our workforce over the last three years.

During the same time the draw down completed and our officer recruiting goals have gone up about 35 percent. We went down in officer recruiters by 30 percent and up in goal by 30 percent and now we expect the recruiters to go out and be successful.

After increasing the recruiting force to 5,000 enlisted recruiters, billets were bought in the transition of personnel to recruiting. At that time, I was able to claim 120 enlisted recruiting billets and add them to officer recruiting. This is a step in the right direction for officer recruiting and we are now looking forward to a better forecast in recruiting. **NR**

PART II of this interview will conclude next month in the August issue of NR, including an exclusive interview with RADM Voelker.



The Honor Guard comes to Harlem

125th street hears a new sound

Story by JO1 Elaine C. Sandman
Navy Recruiting District New York
Assistant Public Affairs Officer

Harlem's 125th Street sidewalks seem perpetually full of hurrying people – white-collar and blue-collar workers, backpack clad students, mothers with toddlers in tow and construction workers ripping up sidewalks or balancing on scaffolding modernizing building fronts.

The street sings with the continuous clamor of workers hurriedly unloading or loading trucks impudently double-parked, in some places closing the street to one lane of travel in each direction. The street itself is a whirl of cars and trucks whizzing by, dodging the ones at momentary rest.

Recently a hush came over this cacophony of noise followed by a sound which may have been heard on 125th Street only in the shadows of a time long ago, perhaps upon the triumphal return of troops from

Heads began turning to track where the sound was coming from — it appeared to originate in the Adam Clayton Powell State Building.

This new distraction was a very distinctive, sharp, metallic and repetitive sound. Curious pedestrians were stopping and pointing toward the building. At first they saw a New York City police car — its lights in full flash mode. But that wasn't the source of this new sound. It was coming from directly behind the car. The crowds on the sidewalks slowed down and all heads turned to follow the United States Navy Ceremonial Silent Rifle Drill Team from Washington, DC.

The drill team had just finished a performance on the State Building's Plaza One area. Now they were marching down 125th street on their way to the newly opened offices of the Joint Military Services Recruiting Station in Harlem, NY.

Commanded by Seaman Jonothon Buagh, the Drill Team's metal tap shoes were what had caused the sound that made heads turn seeking its source. As the team members marched down the street they spun their 1903 Springfield Rifles in complex maneuvers as if they were light as feathers.

Followed by the curious crowd and accompanied by their manager, Chief Electronics' Technician (SW) Patrick T. Spurgeon, the drill team arrived at the sight of the new offices.

The crowd following the drill team was treated to a ribbon cutting ceremony by Commander, Navy Recruiting District New York, Cmdr. Edward W. Gehrke, and his Marine counterpart, Commanding Officer, Recruiting Station New York, Maj. Paul D. Greatsinger. The crowd was invited in for refreshments and a question-answer session with the drill



team members and station staff. Navy Career Counselor 1st Class John Diaz, Fire Control Technician 1st Class Derrick Wilkerson, Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Lenny Ramos, Machinist's Mate 3rd Class Luis Gomez and Storekeeper 3rd Class Ray Bravo are the operators of the Navy half of this modern new station. FC3 Chris Swinny assisted that day while on HARP duty from *USS Detroit*, home ported in Earle, NJ. Hospital Corpsman Odayao

and Dental Technician Fernandez, recent April graduates of the Navy's Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Ill., also fielded questions while they were home on Blue Jacket HARP duty. More than 20 potential Sailors of the future fired off questions that day thanks to the Ceremonial Drill Team.

For information on how to have the drill team visit your recruiting district contact EWCS (SW/AW) Kirk Wilson, Ceremonial Honor Guard supervisor @ (202) 433-0078. **NR**

Recruiter Health *Avoiding* *that snake in the grass*

Story by Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

U.S. service members are based around the world and spend a lot of time in the bush. It's almost inevitable they will confront poisonous snakes, and for many, there's a temptation to try killing them.

But snakes, especially poisonous snakes in the United States, are generally shy and are generally as scared of you as you are of them. Most often, they will move to avoid you.

In the United States, 7,000 venomous snakebites are reported annually resulting in 15 fatalities. So, even if you are bitten, your odds of surviving are roughly 466 out of 467.

Prevention is the best cure. Males ages 15 to 30 suffer the most venomous snakebites, and most of them occur on the arms from the hand to elbow.

"What's that say to you?" asked Bill Kane, director of education at SOLO, the wilderness education center in Conway, NH. "It means these guys are picking up poisonous snakes." Kane said most of these poisonous snakebites happen in the Southeast and Southwest. "Just leave them alone," he said.

Even if a poisonous snake bites you, you've got a 50-50 chance that no venom is injected. Rattlesnakes, cottonmouths and copperheads are pit vipers and are the most common poisonous snakes in America.

"They only inject venom when they are striking to eat something," Kane said. "They are not going to eat something the size of a human, so 40 to 50 percent of the time these are dry bites."

Demeter said snake strikes against humans are generally defensive. "About half of snake bites tend to be dry bites," he said. "If you are bitten, you would know pretty quickly whether poison was injected or not." If the snake injects venom, the victim will feel intense, burning pain and swelling around the holes.

The one piece of first aid people should remember is to not panic. "Contrary to myth," Demeter said, "there's no such thing as a 'one-stepper' or a 'two-stepper'" — that's the power of the snake venom expressed as the number of steps you can take before you keel over dead. "The toxicity of these snakes is highly exaggerated." What people need to do

is to receive treatment as soon as possible after being bitten, he said.

DoD officials said military medics carry antivenom. A soldier, Sailor, airman or Marine bitten by a poisonous snake is generally only minutes away from treatment. Antivenom is an equine serum; persons sensitive to vaccines from horses could have an allergic reaction.

"We commonly see that in those who have been treated with the serum before," Demeter said. "Those people stand a higher chance of going into anaphylactic shock."

Treatment for snakebite has changed over the years. Accepted practice no longer involves making X-cuts at or above the fang marks and sucking the poison out with your mouth.

"It's best not to do a whole lot," Demeter said. "If you have not done first aid on a snake bite, then you haven't done anything wrong yet."

The most commonly recommended treatment today is to keep the bite area immobilized below the level of the heart. Kane said medics can place a light constricting band between the bite and the heart. "The problem is that many people get carried away," Kane said. "That band turns into a tourniquet. You don't want to do that."

Remove any jewelry the person may be wearing. Swelling from the snakebite can progress rapidly, so rings, watches and bracelets can turn into a real problem.

Kane said medics can use a syringe-like Sawyer Extractor to suck venom from the bite site, but that's only effective if used within minutes of a bite."

Get the victim to a hospital as quickly as possible. Antivenom serum is the only sure cure, and because some people are allergic to horse serum it should only be given in a fully equipped medical facility.

Don't use ice to slow the spread of the venom. Researchers have found freezing of the stricken limb is a major factor leading to amputation.

The best cure for snakebite is prevention. Here's the CDC's tips:

1. Do not play with snakes.
2. Keep landscape well manicured.
3. Wear shoes around the house.
4. Wear gloves when weeding.
5. Wear boots in snake country.
6. Develop the habit of watching where you step and where you place your hands. **NR**

Got a question about Recruit Training Command?

Visit Recruit Training Command's Web site at <www.ntcpao.com/rtc.htm>.

NR July 2001

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-Every station successful

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